

(7) J.H.
THE PROFLIGACY AND INCORRIGIBILITY OF ANY NATION
OR PEOPLE, A SURE PRESAGE OF APPROACHING
TEMPORAL CALAMITIES.

A
S E R M O N

On ISAIAH vi. 9, 10, 11, 12.

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF BRECHIN, APRIL EIGH-
TEENTH 1793, THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A
NATIONAL FAST.

BY THE REVEREND
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ISAIAH, VI. 9, 10, 11, 12.

AND HE SAID, GO AND TELL THIS PEOPLE, HEAR YE INDEED BUT UNDERSTAND NOT. MAKE THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE, FAT, AND MAKE THEIR EARS HEAVY, AND SHUT THEIR EYES; LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND CONVERT, AND BE HEALED. THEN SAID I, LORD, HOW LONG? AND HE ANSWERED, UNTIL THE CITIES BE WASTED WITHOUT INHABITANT, AND THE HOUSES WITHOUT MAN, AND THE LAND BE UTTERLY DESOLATE; AND THE LORD HAVE REMOVED MEN FAR AWAY, AND THERE BE A GREAT FORSAKING IN THE MIDST OF THE LAND.

THE words of my text contain a very severe and awful message, which Isaiah was commissioned by God, to carry to the children of Israel.—It is certain, the Israelites, in Isaiah's time, were sunk into a state of the deepest corruption and depravity, and they were rendered the more inexcusable, as God had been at all imaginable pains, in order to reclaim them. He had sent one prophet after another to instruct them. He endeavoured, at one time, to bring them back to himself, and their duty, by the most endearing pro-

promises of his favour and protection ; at another time, he alarms them with the most terrible threatenings ; and in order to rouse them up and awaken them more effectually, he inflicts on them, in the course of his providence, the heaviest temporal calamities. The various methods, however, which he had made use of, whether of a gentler or severer kind, had not as yet produced any good effect. They continued as bad as ever, without discovering the smallest symptom of repentance or amendment. God is therefore provoked at length, to strive with them no longer, to give them up entirely to themselves, and to leave them under the power of their own obstinacy and hardness—the heaviest judgment that can be inflicted on any sinner, next to the damnation of hell itself. This inexpressibly severe and dreadful judgment was just on the point of being inflicted on the Israelites, and Isaiah gives them a fair and solemn warning of what was to happen. In respect of external privileges and advantages, their condition was to be the same as formerly ; God's laws and ordinances were to be continued with them, but his gracious presence was to be withdrawn, and they were to derive no real benefit from the inestimable privileges they enjoyed, as God's peculiar people. God was to abandon them



to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, and to permit them, as a just punishment on them for their impenitence and obstinacy, to pursue their sinful courses now, in the deepest ease and security, without fear or shame, without remorse or painful feeling.

Such is the plain meaning and import of the strong and emphatical expressions, that they should *bear and yet not understand, see and yet not perceive. Their hearts were to be made fat, their ears heavy, and their eyes were to be shut, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts and convert, and be healed.*

To prevent all mistakes with respect to the genuine sense and meaning of these words, it is proper to take notice, that we are not to understand them as importing, that God has any pleasure in the impenitence, obstinacy, and ruin of sinners, or that the blame of their misconduct is in any respect chargeable on him. To think or affirm, or so much as insinuate this of the infinitely just and holy God, would be to derogate, in the highest degree, from the infinite perfection of his nature, and the unalterable rectitude of his government. We are sure, that
 God

God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that they would turn from the evil of their way, and live. We are equally certain, that when sinners will not be reformed, when all the efforts of mercy for this purpose have been ineffectual, when they will not see, nor hear, nor understand, and wilfully and obstinately shut their eyes, and ears, and hearts against the various and re-iterated instructions, admonitions, and warnings, which have been given them—in this case, the Great Judge of the world very often interposes immediately, and in a way of just and righteous judgment. He himself *makes their hearts fat, and their ears heavy, and shuts their eyes, so that they shall not see with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their hearts, nor convert, and be healed*; not indeed by infusing sinful desires and inclinations into their hearts, but by abandoning them to the uncontrolled power and dominion of their own corruption, and withdrawing every check and restraint, which they might have been formerly under—an awful and alarming method of procedure, but agreeable in every respect to the strictest rule of equity and justice.

Such is the heavy judgment denounced against the Israelites in my text—a judgment however which

which was not to come single and alone. It was to be accompanied with, and draw after it a horried train of other calamities; forsaken of God, given up by him to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart. Could the Israelites think, or expect to be prosperous and happy in such circumstances? It was indeed a vain thought. The prophet assures them, that such a state and condition was the sure presage and forerunner of the heaviest temporal calamities to be inflicted on them, as a people or nation. Tho' there was no appearance of danger for the present, and tho' these calamities might be deferred for many years, yet they would certainly come at last. *Their cities were to be wasted without inhabitant, and their houses without man, and the land to be utterly desolate. The Lord was to remove men far away, and there was to be a great forsaking in the the midst of the land.*

The application of this subject to ourselves, and to the present situation of our country, is obvious and apparent. If we be a people forsaken of God, if we be given up by him in a way of just and righteous judgment, to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart—if this be the general characteristic of our nation, in vain do we look for national peace, prosperity, and happiness.

piness. Let us not deceive ourselves with vain expectations. Public calamities of every kind are justly to be dreaded and apprehended by a nation or people, whom God has abandoned, or whom he seems on the point of abandoning, or giving up to themselves. This is the important and awful topic inculcated in my text, and which I think worthy of our deepest and most serious attention.

I pretend not to enter into the secret designs of Providence, or to prognosticate, or conjecture the particular events, which may happen to this or any other nation, and I abhor the malignity of that man's heart, who is ever foreboding ruin to his country—my design is the reverse of this. It is to persuade you to repentance and amendment, by this awful consideration, that the wickedness, profligacy, and incorrigibility of any nation or people, are sure signs and prognostics of heavy temporal calamities, about to fall on that nation or people, even tho' they should be delayed for years and ages to come.

In the prosecution of so important and interesting a subject, I propose, in an humble dependence on divine aid,

First,

First, to specify some marks and characters of a people, whom God seems, notwithstanding the continuance of external means and mercies, to have given, or to be giving up to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart.

Secondly, to make it appear, by a variety of considerations, that when any people or nation are forsaken of God, it is a sure sign and presage of God's being to inflict heavy temporal calamities on them, sooner or later.

And then, to conclude the discourse by suggesting such practical use, and improvement of it, as may be directly and immediately suited to the design and occasion of this solemn day.

I am, first, to specify some marks and characters of a people whom God seems, notwithstanding the continuance of external means and mercies, to have given up, or to be giving up to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart.

Let us deal honestly with our own hearts, and if these characters are in any degree applicable to ourselves, let us take the alarm, and dread the threatened judgments.

I affirm, first, that when a people or nation sin openly and obstinately, in barefaced contempt of the laws of God, and in express contradiction to the remonstrances of conscience, and the very light of nature, they appear to be given up, or are on the very point of being given up by God, to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart.— Surely we have not observed with any measure of attention what passes daily around us, if we are not sensible, that this is too much the case with all ranks and degrees of people in these kingdoms. Iniquity of every kind has overspread our land, like a torrent, and carries all before it with resistless impetuosity. The most abominable vices, equally disgraceful to the christian profession, and to human nature itself, are practised openly and avowedly, without shame, without fear, without the smallest appearance of remorse or horror. The grossest acts of injustice, dishonesty, trade, villany, and oppression, are committed by many without a scruple, provided they can do it with impunity. To promote their own interest and advantage, is the only object they seem to have in view. It is no matter by what means, just or unjust, good or bad, this object is accomplished; and what is worst of all, villany itself, the grossest villany in business is scarcely considered as a crime, when

when it is attended with success. The successful villain, who has amassed riches, or raised himself to power and preferment in the world, by the most unjustifiable methods, is daily applauded, courted, caressed and fawned on by those around him, in the basest and most servile manner, while the man of probity and honour, on whose lawful enterprizes, it may be, providence has frowned, or who, through the unavoidable accidents of human life, languishes in poverty, is despised, neglected, and forgotten.—Villany, when it is successful, is often considered as a lucky specimen of dexterity and address, and the happy exertion of superior abilities.

Perjury, one of the most atrocious crimes, of which human nature is capable, and which has been justly branded with infamy in all ages, and nations of the world, is perpetrated among us, in many instances, without appearing to excite any horror in the breast of the guilty person himself, and without drawing upon him any measure of disregard and disgrace from those, who are fully enough in the knowledge of his guilt, or at least have every ground and reason to suspect it.

We can scarcely pass along our streets or our
highways,

highways, or enter into few companies, without hearing our great Creator's name blasphemed. Our ears are shocked almost at every turn, with the hideous language of hell. There is this particular aggravation accompanies cursing and swearing, by which it is distinguished from every other species of vice, that there is no original passion in human nature, which tempts us to the commission of it. The curser and swearer is either influenced by a wanton disrespect or contempt of the Majesty of God, or by the irresistible force of a most abominable habit, which having once contracted, he finds it beyond his power to shake off; and in many cases, I believe, by a base and horrid emulation of others in impiety. He cannot all the while alledge, that there is any original desire, passion, or appetite of human nature prompting him, or that he is induced by any motive of advantage or pleasure.—Infatuated creature! He is a perfect volunteer in the service of sin and the devil. In this respect, an habitual curser and swearer, be his rank and station what it will, appears very like the person whom God has abandoned.

With respect to drunkenness, debauchery, whoredom, and all sensual excesses, they are become so common and fashionable, that they are
little

little thought of ; they are scarcely considered as sinful ; they are regarded as a sort of harmless gratifications, which even good men may safely indulge. It is certain and notorious, that through an unaccountable infatuation, no sort of shame, or brand of infamy, is put upon these abominable vices. To debauch a married woman from her allegiance to her husband, or to decoy the innocent and unthinking maid to shame and ruin, instead of being regarded with detestation and horror, as things highly criminal, are, on the contrary, considered as a gallant sort of atchievement. The history of Britain, in the present age, I may say, without any exaggeration, exhibits to our view such a black and hideous detail of base intrigues, adulterous amours, and shocking violations of chastity, as would have overwhelmed the heathen world itself, with confusion and shame. Greece and Rome, in their better days, would have turned away their eyes with horror from the odious and dismal spectacle,

To what a phrenzy of wickedness, are we not then arrived ! Does not the word of God declare expressly, that *for these things, the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience?* and does not the light of nature teach us, that, as reasonable creatures, we ought to govern our appetites and
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passions, restrain them within due bounds, and that the immoderate pursuit of sensual gratifications degrades and vilifies the soul, unfits it for the nobler and higher enjoyments, for which it was originally intended, and puts us on a level with the beasts that perish? Whence comes it then, that we openly and avowedly practise these abominations, against which the light of nature and revelation equally exclaim? The only account we can give of it is, that we have wilfully shut our eyes against the light of both, and now God, in a way of just and righteous judgment, is giving us up to ourselves, and to the absolute uncontrolled power and dominion of that blindness and darkness in which we are involved.

Secondly, I observe, that a people or nation seem to be given up, or in the utmost hazard of being given up, by God, when they neglect and disregard the sacred ordinances, and institutions of religion, or when these ordinances and institutions appear to have lost their force and efficacy, and to be dwindling into empty and insignificant forms, without answering the valuable and important purposes, for which they were originally intended. In both these respects, the face of things, up and down our country, wears a gloomy and threatening aspect, and presents before us,
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the melancholy picture of a people, whom God has abandoned.

If we carry our views back to the middle of the last, or the beginning of the present century, we find the highest veneration and regard for the ordinances and institutions of religion, to have been the glorious and distinguishing character of all ranks and degrees of people in the kingdom. The house of God was regularly attended by the highest, as well as by the lower ranks and orders of men. The rich and the great did not think it beneath them, to be daily *waiting at the posts of wisdom's doors*, nor were they ashamed to make a public profession of their faith in the world's great redeemer, at the communion table. You would not have seen the judges of the land, members of parliament, men of rank and station, sitting at home, walking round their improvements, or planning out their worldly schemes, in the time of public worship. You would not have seen them riding journeys without necessity, and receiving visits on the holy day of God. No—the Lord's day was observed with a strictness and punctuality peculiar to ourselves, and unknown almost in any other christian country—a circumstance which reflected the highest honour on our nation. The houses of our nobility and gentry,
were

were a sort of sanctuaries, consecrated to the honour of the great Jehovah. The time which is now wretchedly squandered away in drinking, and at the card table, was appropriated to the nobler and better purpose of divine worship

The voice of malice will possibly suggest, that all these religious appearances were false and counterfeited, and that the period, I am now describing, was marked out with all the most glaring symptoms of hypocrisy and dissimulation. There is no doubt, but hypocrites will at all times be mingled with the sincere worshippers of God.— This will and must be the case, while the world lasts. But to affirm, that this generally was the case, at the period to which I refer, is an uncharitable and groundless aspersions. How sad the contrast between these times and our own! The sad contrast is obvious and glaring. The men of this generation, at least many of them, are as remarkable for the neglect and contempt of religion, as our forefathers were, for a zealous attachment to its interests. What shall we think then, and say, when we are neglecting God, and slighting and undervaluing his word, his ordinances, all the means he has appointed for bringing us to repentance and amendment? When we are forsaking God, in so barefaced and contemptuous a manner—

manner, we have the justest ground to fear, that he is on the point to forsake us, and leave us entirely to ourselves.

Even the case of those who attend on, and profess a regard to the ordinances and institutions of religion, affords but a very uncomfortable prospect. Custom, curiosity, the fashion of the country, and a regard to decency, are the principal motives, by which many are induced to attend on our religious assemblies. We are grossly inattentive to the important and interesting truths of the everlasting gospel. How seldom do we recollect them? How seldom make a fair and home application of them to our own hearts and consciences? Our attendance on them is very often a point of mere form—a form of godliness without the power of it—a name to live while we are dead, is too much the characteristic of our professors of religion. A high regard is often pretended to the external and positive institutions of religion, in order to excuse and palliate the habitual and shameful neglect of those duties which are in their own nature of eternal and unalterable obligation. Deceit and villany, covetousness and lust, the most selfish and sordid schemes and purposes, and a malicious, bitter, and censorious temper are often disguised under,

and covered over with a fair and flaming profession of religion. God appears to be in a great measure forsaking his house and ordinances.— Those powerful influences of his spirit, on which the success of all external means depends, are in a great degree withdrawn. The arm of the Lord does not put on strength, as in the days of old. The time has been, when it snatched souls by thousands, like firebrands from the burning; but now God hides and draws it back. A pure dispensation of the Gospel still remains, at least, in many parts of the kingdom, but that dispensation is become lifeless and ineffectual. It does not produce those salutary effects on the hearts and lives of men, which in its own nature it is adapted, and which it never fails to produce, when accompanied with the powerful operation of the spirit of God. And it is very certain, that a gospel dispensation, which God makes use of as the means of convincing and converting sinners, by being abused and misimproved, proves the unhappy occasion of their being more hardened in sin. In this respect God seems to be saying concerning us, *make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, &c.*

I observe, 3dly, that a people appear to be given up of God, when they are impatient of admoni-

admonitions and rebukes—a characteristic too justly applicable to the present generation. There is not a minister of the gospel, who has endeavoured to discharge the duties of his station, faithfully and impartially, but must have experienced the truth of this remark, to his deep regret. The people to whom we address ourselves, are fond of a general and random sort of preaching. But if we bring the business home to their own consciences, if we point out to each his particular faults and failings, rip up every one's sore without respect of persons, lash the vices of the age, and animadvert particularly on the sins and abominations which we know to be flagrant, among the people immediately under our inspection, that moment our doctrine becomes offensive and disgusting—it is unedifying and unfit for the pulpit. The professor of religion, as faulty as others, notwithstanding his fair pretensions, puts in his word, and says, this is not the doctrine of the Gospel. This fills us with regret and sorrow, and we are ready to adopt the words of the prophet Jeremiah.* *To whom shall we give warning and speak that they may hear us : Their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken ; Behold the word of the Lord is to them a reproach, and they have no delight in it.* It is not to be dissembled here, that we ourselves, the public teachers of
others,

* Jeremiah, vi, 10.

others, are sadly defective in this most essential and necessary part of our duty. The fear of offending man, which always brings a snare, a servile courting of the great and powerful, and a variety of secular considerations, in many instances restrain us from discharging faithfully the duties of our station. Possessed with a silly fondness for pleasing a carnal generation, who would have us *speake smooth things, and prophecy deceits*, we are loth to meddle with the harsh and disagreeable business of rebukes, or our reprehensions are administered in so unequal and partial a manner, as serves to defeat their own end and object, and furnishes our people with a weapon against ourselves, which they never fail to improve to our disadvantage. We cannot enough lament and bewail on this day of fasting, that God seems to be threatening us, the ministers of the gospel, the public teachers of religion, at the present juncture, as he did his prophets of old—an awful token, that he is on the point of leaving both us and our people to ourselves.*—*I will make thy tongue to cleave to the roof of thy mouth, so that thou shalt not be to them a reprover. For they are a rebellious house. There shall be like people and like priest, and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings.*

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* Ezekiel, iii. 26—Hos. iv. 6. 9.

I add, in the last place, that a people or nation appear to be given up, or are in the utmost hazard of being given up of God, when they are inattentive to, and unaffected with these dispensations of providence, which are directly calculated to awaken and rouse them up, and lead them to repentance.

We entered on the American war flushed with the hopes of success ; we imagined nothing could stand before our fleets and armies. The whole continent of America, we assured ourselves, would soon be subjected, and submit to any terms we were pleased to impose. We discovered the highest degree of national pride and vanity.—*He who sits in the Heaven laughed, and the Lord had us in derision.* We were obliged at last, after vast expence of blood and treasure, to acknowledge the independence of America. We ought however, to be thankful, that as a nation we have sustained no real loss or disadvantage, by our disunion from America. Never did our trade and commerce flourish in a higher degree, never was Britain in a more prosperous and happy state at any former period, than she has been since the end of the American war. Alas ! we have not made a proper use of the unmerited goodness of God towards us—His goodness has not led us as
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it ought, to repentance ; irreligion and impiety, vice and wickedness of every kind, have in a manner kept pace with our prosperity. God, in the course of his sovereign providence, in order to rouse us up and awaken us, is pleased to visit us with new judgments. In the midst of peace, prosperity, and plenty, all on a sudden, while we are not dreading or apprehending it, we are involved in all the horrors, and in all the dangers, of war. We flatter ourselves, that this war cannot be of long continuance. The French divided among themselves, deserted and betrayed by their most renowned generals, and at war in a manner with all the world, can scarcely stand out a single campaign. They must succumb, and prostrate themselves at the feet of Great Britain, and her illustrious allies ; their boasted republic will shortly disappear, and vanish like a meteor. Liberty and Equality, the Shibboleth of the seditious and rebellious, will be no more heard of over all Europe ; the illustrious Marie Antoinette will be released from her confinement ; the barbarous regicides, whose iron hearts did not shudder at taking off the head of a king, will meet with condign punishment ; and young Capet will re-ascend the throne of his ancestors. This, I know, you wish for, and this you expect. But you and I ought never to be too sanguine
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in our hopes and expectations. The events of war are absolutely uncertain. What is future is entirely in God's own hand. But suppose, that the arms of Great Britain and her allies are victorious, that the ancient monarchy of France is re-established, and that unhappy people reduced to that state of abject servitude they were in before the meeting of the constituent assembly; supposing this to be the case, it is nevertheless certain, that an infinitely just and Holy God has a thousand arrows in his quiver, with which he can shoot at us, and visit us for our iniquities.

I am therefore naturally brought to the second branch of my subject, viz. To make it appear, by a variety of considerations, that when any nation or people are deserted and given up of God, it is a sure sign and presage of God's being to inflict heavy temporal calamities on that nation or people, sooner or later.

The truth of this assertion might be clearly proved from the nature of things. Religion and holiness, wherever they prevail, are calculated, in their own nature, to promote not only the private interest of individuals, but the public interest and happiness of nations, and the general good
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of fociety; whereas impiety, fin, and wickedness of every kind, are prejudicial to fociety, and in their own nature destructive of the common interest of mankind; and in whatever nation they are universally prevalent, the ruin of that nation may be justly looked for and apprehended, without regard to any immediate judgment of heaven, according to the order and course of things, which the great governor of the world has established, and according to which, his conduct to nations and kingdoms has been constantly and uniformly directed. But as this is an argument of an abstract kind, and consequently not so obvious to the capacities of the generality, nor so ready to arrest their attention, as what is drawn from experience; for this reason, I shall pass it over, and confine myself entirely to plain and uncontrollable matter of fact.

If we look back to the state of nations and kingdoms in all ages of the world, and if we take our examples either from the sacred records, or from profane history, we find both of them agree in establishing and confirming this important and interesting truth, that the wickedness, impiety, and incorrigibility of a nation or people, is the infallible prognostic and prelude to national calamity and ruin.

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Consider the state of the antediluvian world, or the state of men before the flood. The race of men, which then lived, was as corrupt and dissolute as can be well imagined; they were given up of God, and abandoned to every sort of wickedness. Pray, what was the consequence, and in what did this issue? You know very well, that it issued in the total destruction of this race of men, (Noah and his family only excepted.) God sent Noah a preacher of righteousness, to call them to repentance, and to give them warning of the impending danger; but they derided the preaching and warnings of this holy man. Their hearts were hardened, and their eyes shut—they were secure, and insensible of danger. They saw no bad appearances, when Noah preached; for this reason, they considered all he said as idle cant and jargon, and indeed it was not till after a great number of years, no less than 120, that Noah's threatenings were executed. They were not however the less certain, because they were delayed to a distant period. Behold at last, the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the flood swept away that abandoned generation from off the face of the earth, while they were fearing no evil, and dreaming of no danger.

We need not go so far back as the age before the flood. The Jews in particular are a melancholy proof of what I am now asserting. In the time of Isaiah, they were left to themselves, and forsaken of God ; and pray, what was to be the consequence of this? The very same which is here predicted, *their cities were to be wasted without inhabitant, and their houses without man, and the land was to be utterly desolate.* It is particularly to be observed, that there was not the smallest appearance of danger, when Isaiah uttered the mournful prediction. Their affairs were flourishing, they were at peace with all their neighbours, nor had they the smallest ground to suspect harm from any quarter. The threatened judgment, however, was not the less certain, for having been delayed; it was executed at last with a vengeance; their country was ravaged, and conquered by the Babylonians or Chaldeans, their temple razed from its foundation, their city burned, and they themselves carried into a wretched captivity, from which they were not released till after a space of seventy years.

It is true, the Jews were afterwards restored to their own country, and re-established in the full possession of their religion, laws, and government, and though after this period they were careful to
avoid

avoid idolatry, yet they went to the other extreme of superstition; so that religion among them dwindled into a set of empty unmeaning forms: a universal depravation of manners followed of course, and at the time of our Saviour's appearance, they were the most wicked and abandoned set of people under the sun. The words of my text are quoted by our Saviour and his apostles, again and again, as a just description of their abandoned character; and the calamities here predicted, refer not only to those they suffered under the Babylonish captivity, but to the infinitely greater calamities, which attended the siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus, and to the total destruction and ruin of their nation by the Romans. At the time our Saviour denounced the destruction of the city and temple by the Romans, there was not the smallest appearance of such a calamity. They were living in quiet subjection to the Roman government, and instead of meditating a revolt, they pretended the warmest loyalty to Cæsar and the empire, and made use of this pretext as a handle for crucifying the son of God. The judgment nevertheless came at last, a dreadful catastrophe, to which the annals of history scarcely affords any thing parallel or equal. And now they are dispersed over all the world, a taunt and bye word in all the countries, in which they

they are scattered—a living and awful monument of that calamity and ruin, which, sooner or latter, must be the portion of that people or nation, whom God himself has abandoned.

If it were necessary or proper, I might lay before you the history of all the great empires of the world—I might represent to you, the state of Greece, so renowned in profane history—I might represent to you, the condition of the mighty Roman empire, in its rise, progress, and fall. From this detail, you would clearly see, that the different states and kingdoms of the world, have been prosperous and happy in the same proportion, in which religion and virtue have flourished among them; and in the same proportion in which they have decayed, and in which vice and immorality have abounded, in the same proportion they have ceased to flourish, and one calamity, on the back of another, has come upon them, till they were at last totally overturned.

To what then does this subject tend, and what use and improvement ought we to make of it?

The use we ought to make of it is to mourn, and be grieved, that many, among all ranks and degrees of people in those kingdoms, should discover

cover such sad signs and symptoms of their being forsaken and deserted of God, or at least in the utmost hazard of being so. The very thought is terrible, and it cannot fail to affect the heart of every person, who has any real concern for the welfare of his country. God forbid that any of us should be unaffected with so awful a consideration.

Though the war we are now engaged in, should be attended with all the success we could wish for, and though the judgment, to which our crying sins and abominations have rendered us obnoxious, should be respited and delayed for a while, we are not, on that account, to consider ourselves as safe, and out of danger, as long as we are forsaken of God, or while we appear to be in the way of having so terrible a judgment inflicted on us.—The threatened judgments of God are not the less certain, because they are delayed. They will come upon us at last, and they will be the heavier, in proportion as they have been delayed,

Let us therefore be concerned, each of us, that we may be brought back to God, and that our hearts may be renewed, and ourselves amended. Let us search out, every one of us, our own plague, and our own sore; let us be concerned, that our
eyes

eyes and ears may be opened, that our hearts may be made soft, and that we may be converted to God, so as he may heal us, and have mercy on us. A general reformation, if ever it take place, must begin with the reformation of individuals. Instead of exclaiming against, and throwing the blame on others, let us begin at home, and calmly and candidly recollect the hand, we ourselves have had, in the national provocation, and the national guilt. Let us confess our sins, with the bitterest sorrow and contrition of heart, and endeavour to forsake them, crying out, each of us, with the utmost sincerity and earnestness, *turn us, O Lord, and we shall be turned, draw us, and we shall run after thee.* In this way, we may reasonably hope, that God will protect and bless us, and that he will make our Zion glorious, and our Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

In the Following Sermon.

Page 26. line 4. For *hid*, read *hide*.

Page 28. line 1. For *assembling*, read *assembling*.